



Interview Summary: Lynne Lamarche, Canada Border Services Agency

This witness summary should be read in conjunction with: the Canada Border Service Agency (“**CBSA**”)’s Institutional Report; the witness summary for the CBSA panel, which consisted of John Ossowski (the former President), Ted Gallivan (the Executive Vice-President), Scott Harris (the Vice-President of Intelligence and Enforcement), and Christine Durocher (the Regional Director General of the Southern Ontario Region); the witness summary for Nina Patel (the Regional Director General of the Pacific Region); and the witness summary for Brad Wozny (the Regional Director General of the Prairie Region).

Lynne Lamarche was interviewed by Shantona Chaudhury, John Mather, and Alexandra Heine on September 2, 2022. Questions about this summary should be directed to Ms. Heine.

Text contained in [square brackets] are explanatory notes provided by Commission Counsel to assist the reader.

Background

The CBSA is responsible for providing integrated border services that support national security and public safety priorities and facilitate the free flow of persons and goods across international borders. The CBSA operates ports of entry (“**POEs**”) across the country.

Lynne Lamarche is the CBSA’s Director of the Operational Guidance Division. She reports to Sharon Spicer, Director General (Dan Badour at the time of the events), who reports to Denis Vinette, the Vice President of the CBSA’s Travellers Branch. During the Freedom Convoy (“**Convoy**”), Messrs. Vinette and Badour report to the Executive Vice President, Ted Gallivan, and the President of the CBSA, formerly John Ossowski.

The Border Operations Centre

Ms. Lamarche manages the Border Operations Centre (“**BOC**”), which is the CBSA’s 24/7 global monitoring center for events and issues that impact the border continuum.

The BOC works every day to keep its officials informed of CBSA operations through standardized reporting. For example, the BOC provides different situational reports for various events like border wait times at different POEs, as well as enforcement actions includes searches, investigations, seizures, and arrests at the border.

As Ms. Lamarche explained, when an issue arises, the BOC is the first point of contact for coordinating CBSA’s critical response. It liaises with all internal and external partners to ensure an integrated response and business continuity at the border as well as frontline support throughout the event duration and post. Depending on the duration and scope of



an event, the CBSA may decide to stand up a special taskforce to manage the event so that the BOC can continue its normal mandate.

The BOC's COVID-19 Mandate Protests Operational Impacts Situational Reports

Ms. Lamarche explained that during the Convoy, the BOC provided reporting through the COVID-19 Mandate Protests Operational Impacts Situational Reports ("**Situational Reports**").

These Situational Reports were distributed multiple times daily for the entirety of the Convoy event. [The Situational Reports were distributed to many recipients, including but not limited to the President, the Executive Vice-President, the Vice-Presidents of CBSA's various branches, the Directors General, and the Regional Directors General.] No task force was set up in response to the Convoy because the event was very fluid, constantly shifting thereby requiring swift posture changes and the CBSA did not know how long it would last.

Ms. Lamarche explained that much of the information that went into the Situational Reports came from the CBSA's Regional Operations Centres ("**ROCs**"). The ROCs gathered their information from border services officers ("**BSOs**"), who were responsible for filing standardized reports on notable events occurring at their POE.

Threat Assessments

Though much of the information in the Situational Reports came from ROCs, Ms. Lamarche specified that the information and threat assessments contained in the "Intelligence and Law Enforcement" section of the reports¹ originated from the CBSA's intelligence team, which is part of the Intelligence and Enforcement Branch.

Ms. Lamarche was asked whether she knew how the CBSA's intelligence team makes their threat assessments. She explained that they rely on intelligence from the CBSA's partner agencies [e.g., the Royal Canadian Mounted Police ("**RCMP**") and open source intelligence [e.g. social media] for any information they can gather pertaining to the POE. She noted that CBSA's threat assessments might differ from, for example, the RCMP's because the CBSA's would be strictly focused on the POE, whereas the RCMP has a broader law enforcement focus.

Ms. Lamarche was then specifically asked about the change in the Bottom Line Up Front assessment in the February 14, 16:00ET, Situational Report, which, for the first time, stated "[t]here has been a significant operational impact that may result in a threat to Canada's economic security and prosperity". Ms. Lamarche did not know why this line

¹ See for e.g., *CBSA COVID-19 Mandate Protests Operational Impacts, Situational Reports, January 28 to February 14, 2022*, **PB.NSC.CAN.00000733**, **SSM.NSC.CAN.00000001 to 8** and **SSM.NSC.CAN.00000012, 17, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 32, 33, 41, 42, 45, 49, 50, 53, 68, 329**.



was added, and stated that it would have been provided by the CBSA's intelligence team and as such indicated they would need to answer this question. However, she did note that the risk assessment was changing from hour to hour at times, as the rhetoric online was changing, events were increasing in number and media was reporting on economic impacts and speculating on the potential for the government to invoke the *Emergencies Act*.

This was the extent of Ms. Lamarche's knowledge about the threat assessments in the Situational Reports, because the BOC does not assess threats, make any determinations about threats, or propose changes to the intelligence team's threat assessments.

The Deputy Minister Meeting Briefings

Ms. Lamarche was asked about her team's involvement in preparing the "Deputy Minister Meeting" briefings.² [The Deputy Minister Meeting briefings were packages that were prepared for Mr. Ossowski and his Associate, Mr. Gallivan, for Deputy Minister-level meetings that were occurring during the event. These packages contained items like speaking points, issue specific backgrounders, and sample Situational Reports, maps of affected POEs.]

Ms. Lamarche confirmed that her Customs Processing Section team prepared these briefings, but only on a temporary and exceptional basis. Typically, such tasks fall to individuals in the strategic policy branch (Parliament Affairs or Cabinet Affairs) because departments like BOC, which are operational entities, do not have expertise with drafting deputy and minister level briefing documents nor is it their mandate. Ms. Lamarche's division, by virtue of its frontline support mandate, agreed to assist because the circumstances they were facing were exceptionally intense and fluid, everyone was very busy, and much of the content of the briefings was drawn from the information in the Situational Reports, which the BOC was already preparing.

Given her team's involvement in preparing the briefings, Ms. Lamarche was asked why the line "[o]verall threat level for Canada's POEs remains low" in the February 12 briefing's speaking points was not included in the February 13 speaking points.³ She did not know and recalled that it was not her team who prepared those two briefings, but noted that this was consistent with the level of rhetoric and the information floating around about automobile plants shutting down and trade numbers from Transport Canada. She explained that by February 10, her team had stopped preparing the briefings, as in discussions with Mr. Ossowski's Chief of Staff, it had been determined that since the

² See for e.g., *Deputy Minister Meeting Briefing, February 10, 2022*, **SSM.NSC.CAN.00000316**; *Deputy Minister Meeting Briefing, February 12, 2022*, **SSM.NSC.CAN.00000318**; *Deputy Minister Meeting Briefing, February 13, 2022*, **SSM.NSC.CAN.00000321**.

³ *Deputy Minister Meeting Briefing, February 12, 2022*, **SSM.NSC.CAN.00000318**, at p. 1.



talking points were practically a copy and paste from the Situational Reports and did not offer any additional content, it did not make sense to continue producing separate documents.

Engagement with other Governmental Agencies

Ms. Lamarche explained that she took proactive steps in the second week of the Convoy to try and organize an *ad hoc* Director-level meeting between Global Affairs Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada, Transport Canada, Agriculture Canada, and the CBSA with the aim of sharing information and coordinating efforts to mitigate the impact of the protests on Canada's reputation and trade relationship with the United States and other trading partners.

Though Ms. Lamarche successfully organized three meetings with her counterparts in those departments, she explained that given CBSA's public safety portfolio and expertise, the CBSA was more advanced in its knowledge of and response to the protests. Further, Ms. Lamarche explained that each department at the table, including her own CBSA, was bound by limitations to information sharing capabilities which, after the initial touch points, limited the meetings' usefulness to the CBSA's response.

No further meetings were organized.